185 Before he took his leave from Sharjah, he implored me to send
311 him some catalogues of British firms giving details of agricultural machinery, as he was determined to experiment on his estates at Quwait and prove to his own satisfaction that the desert could be made to bloom. His own gardens at the Sheikh's Wells were alone an object lesson in vegetable growing under difficult climatic and soil conditions, and I believe that if he had been given a free hand in Oman the Arab population could have been made self-supporting. He could never understand why the British authorities would give no assistance to agricultural development, and insisted in exporting from India, even during the critical period of the war when transport was one of our greatest problems, cereals and other foods which could have been cultivated locally.

● 134 It must not be imagined that the growing of cereals and vegetables is an easy matter in Arabia. In Oman nine-tenths of the surface is composed of sand which, under analysis, reveals a
312 remarkable proportion of salt and acids. Much of the land is at sea level, or even below it, so that the well-water is salt and brackish and unfit for plants. Yet in the higher ground there is no limit to the number of wells which may be dug, provided suitable machinery is available. The subterranean water supply is limitless, being replenished during the heavy rains by streams and torrents which rush down from the mountains. Artesian wells which were drilled by the R.A.F. at Sharjah proved to the satisfaction of the engineers that even in the low-lying areas water can be found at economical depths.

312 A properly-controlled irrigation system would be a costly
241 proposition at the outset, requiring extensive equipment and power units; but once it were installed, with a sufficiency of reservoirs to retain the supplies and modern pumping installations to ensure an adequate flow to canalized areas, one of the main difficulties of desert cultivation would have been overcome. Scientific treatment of the soil is another essential consideration, and from experiments which I undertook at Sharjah, with the advice of the Government of India's Agricultural Department in the Sind, I am confident that with proper treatment of the soil, both with chemicals and locally-produced manures, practically anything which grows in the sandy regions of northern India or Iraq, could be grown equally well in Oman.

241 In the small garden at the Fort I have grown cabbages and tomatoes as large and succulent as any which pass through Covent